

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 SAM-01 AID-20 PC-10

DRC-01 EB-11 /144 W

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O R 181132Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7551

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

/AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 2356

E.O. GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IN

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT GIRI'S DOUR ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT

1. PRESIDENT GIRI OPENED PARLIAMENT'S BUDGET SESSION WITH A SOMBER SPEECH DELIVERED AMIDST HECKLING, AND UNPRECEDENTED SCUFFLING BETWEEN FAR LEFT OPPOSITION MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND CONGRESS PARTY MEMBERS PROTECTING THE PRESIDENT. THE JANA SINGH AND SOCIALIST PARTIES BOYCOTTED THE JOINT SESSION. HE BEGAN BY CALLING THIS A TIME OF "DIFFICULTY AND TRIAL" AND CHARACTERIZED THE PEOPLE'S MOOD AS ONE OF "UNDERSTANDABLE ANXIETY." THE REMAINDER OF THE ADDRESS WAS DIVIDED INTO TWO CATEGORIES: ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND FOREIGN POLICY.

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2. AS IN HIS PREVIOUS SPEECHES, GIRI FOCUSSED ON THE TWIN HARDSHIPS

OF INFLATION AND SHORTAGES, BLAMING THE LATTER BOTH ON POOR MANAGEMENT AND HOARDING. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN AT THE SHORTFALL IN GRAIN PROCUREMENT AND LAID HEAVY STRESS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STATES' MEETING PROCUREMENT TARGETS SO THAT THE CONTROL GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE SUFFICIENT SUPPLIES FOR GIVING RELIEF TO DEFICIT STATES.

3. ABOUT ONE-FOURTH OF THE SPEECH WAS DEVOTED TO THE ENERGY SITUATION. GIRI SAID INDIA EXPECTED TO HAVE TO PAY ABOUT \$1 BILLION MORE THAN LAST YEAR FOR ITS OIL IMPORTS. HE WAS CAREFUL TO EXPRESS UNDERSTANDING OF THE DESIRE OF THE OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES TO CONSERVE THEIR DEPLETING RESERVES, BUT PLEADED FOR CONCRETE ASSISTANCE FROM "FRIENDLY COUNTRIES IN WESTERN ASIA" TO HELP INDIA BEAR THE ADVERSE IMPACT OF INCREASED PRICES. HE CALLED FOR VIGOROUS ACTION TO DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ENERGY IN INDIA, PARTICULARLY COAL, WHILE THE COUNTRY CONTINUED TO SEARCH FOR OIL BOTH AT HOME AND IN INDIA'S EXPLORATION ZONE IN IRAQ.

4. THE GUJARAT SITUATION WAS ALMOST IGNORED IN THE SPEECH. GIRI MERELY ASKED INDIAN CITIZENS TO COOPERATE UNDER PRESIDENT'S RULE TO ALLEVIATE HARDSHIPS. MORE SIGNIFICANT WAS HIS PLEA TO ALL POLITICAL PARTIES TO ENSURE PEACEFUL ELECTIONS AND TO AVOID "ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AND EXTRA-CONSTITUTIONAL METHODS."

5. THE FOREIGN POLICY PORTION OF GIRI'S SPEECH WAS A RECITATION OF VISITS AND OFFICIAL CONTACTS WITH FOREIGN LEADERS IN RECENT MONTHS AND CONTAINED NOTHING NEW. HE EXPRESSED "DEEP CONCERN AND DISAPPOINTMENT" OVER THE "ESTABLISHMENT OF A MILITARY BASE" ON DIEGO GARCIA, WHICH HE SAID WAS AGAINST THE INTEREST OF PEACE. RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS WERE SAID TO HAVE "ATTAINED NEWER LEVELS OF MATURITY AND COOPERATION" WHILE THOSE WITH AMERICANS WERE "STRENGTHENED ON THE BASIS OF EQUALITY AND MUTUALITY OF INTERESTS." THE RUPEE AGREEMENT WAS MENTIONED AS AN IMPORTANT RESULT OF THE STRENGTHENING OF RELATIONS WITH THE US.

MOYNIHAN

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